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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4004
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AMCONSUL DANANG 838
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2333

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Ivan Iganberg DATE 12/23/81
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SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN APPEARANCE IN GIO DINH AUGUST 30

1. JOINT PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN APPEARANCES CONTINUED WITHOUT INCIDENT WITH AUGUST 30 MEETING AT THE QUANG TRUONG MILITARY TRAINING CENTER 10 MILES NORTHWEST OF SAIGON. CANDIDATES ARRIVED BY CAR AT THE REVIEWING GROUNDS AT 9:00 A.M. COLONEL LE NGOC TRIEN, COMMANDER OF THE CENTER, MADE BRIEF WELCOMING SPEECH AND TURNED THE PROGRAM OVER TO THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE. LOTS WERE THEN DRAWN TO DETERMINE THE ORDER OF SPEECHES.

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2. THE SPEAKING ARRANGEMENTS WERE WELL HANDLED. CROWD, MOSTLY INDUCTEES, NUMBERED AT LEAST 10,000, AND INCLUDED 30

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PRESS MEMBERS AND ABOUT 100 ARVN OFFICERS. GENERAL THIEU PERSONALLY REPRESENTED HIS SLATE.

3. SIX OF THE SLATES DELIVERED RATHER SIMILAR SPEECHES HIGHLIGHTING THEIR GOOD RECORDS AND REVIEWING PLATFORMS. THE CROWD'S REACTION TO THEM WAS GENERALLY APATHETIC AND IMPATIENT. THESE SLATES WERE: HIEP-TRUYEN, BINH-KHANH, LY-KUONG, QUAT-CHAU, CO-SINH, AND KHANH-DONG.

4. SPEAKING SECOND, THIEU APPEARED IN A PLAIN UNIFORM WITHOUT INSIGNIA. REPEATING HIS PROGRAM OF SOCIAL REFORM, CONSTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY, AND RESOLUTION OF THE WAR, THIEU STRESSED THAT SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE NLF ARE IMPOSSIBLE. ANY FUTURE PEACE TALKS MUST INCLUDE HANOI, THIEU SAID. THEN HE TURNED TO HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE LAST TWO YEARS. IF ELECTED, HE PROMISED THAT THE NEXT FOUR YEARS WOULD SEE A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROGRESS. NOTING THE CRITICISM OF OTHER CANDIDATES AGAINST HIS MILITARY GOVERNMENT, THIEU POINTED OUT THAT NO CANDIDATE COULD HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH EVERYTHING BUT IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES, ONLY THE MILITARY

HAS THE STRENGTH TO OVERCOME THE COMMUNISTS. THIEU ADMITTED THAT ARMY HAS MANY SHORTCOMINGS AND MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE TO IMPROVE IT. CROWD GAVE THIEU SOLID APPLAUSE AT THE END OF HIS SPEECH. FOLLOWING PRESENTATION, CORRESPONDENT ASKED THIEU ABOUT HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS ISSUE OF PEACE AND TALKS WITH NLF. THIEU RESPONDED THAT SOUTH MUST BE STRENGTHENED POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY TO RESIST NORTHERN INVASION. HE CHARACTERIZED NLF AS MERE TOOL OF HANOI AND NOT WORTH TALKING TO.

5. THE NEXT NOTEWORTHY ADDRESS WAS MADE BY TRUONG DINH DZU. SPEAKING FOURTH, DZU PLAYED DOWN HIS NOW STANDARD ORATORY ON PEACE. INSTEAD HE ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO MILITARY REFORM. HE FIRST ATTACKED THE ARMY FOR FAILING TO SUPPLY ITS SOLDIERS WELL AND NEXT FOR ALLOWING THE VIET CONG TO REMAIN SUPERIOR IN THE COLLECTION OF INTELLIGENCE. DZU ALSO CALLED FOR IMPROVED CONSCRIPTION AND PROMOTION SYSTEM. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION DZU PROMISED TO PRODUCE AFTER ELECTION EVIDENCE THAT THIEU/KY HAD BOUGHT OFF 5 NEWSPAPERS IN SUPPORT OF THEIR

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CAMPAIGN. THE CROWD GAVE DZU ONLY MODERATE APPLAUSE.

6. DR. DAN MADE HIS USUAL HARD-HITTING PRESENTATION. HE REVIEWED HISTORY OF WAR, DEPLORED ESCALATION AND QUESTIONED

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EFFECTIVENESS OF ALLIED TROOPS IN ROOTING OUT VC. DAN ALSO QUESTIONED EARLIER STATEMENT BY THIEU THAT ARVN IS ONLY FORCE CAPABLE OF FIGHTING VIET CONG. POPULAR SUPPORT IS ALSO NECESSARY, DAN ADDED, AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION RIVALLING THAT OF COMMUNISTS MUST BE ESTABLISHED. DAN THEN CALLED FOR REFORM OF CONSCRIPTION, "SONS OF THE RICH AND OF HIGHLY-PLACED OFFICIALS GO ABROAD WHILE YOU MUST SERVE IN ARMY. DO YOU LIKE THE PRESENT SYSTEM?" (DAN WAS VIGOROUSLY APPLAUDED.) HE THEN REITERATED APPEAL FOR REFORM OF MILITARY PROMOTION SYSTEM. HE ALSO PROMISED IF ELECTED TO INVITE CAPABLE EXILED GENERALS RETURN TO COUNTRY TO CONTRIBUTE TO NATION-BUILDING PROCESS. DAN ALSO SAID PRIME MINISTER KY IS TOO GOOD A PILOT TO BE WASTED AS POLITICIAN. DAN'S QUESTIONERS WERE SOMEWHAT HOSTILE. HE WAS AGAIN ASKED IF HE HAD CRIED AT HIS TRIAL IN 1962. ANOTHER QUESTIONER ASKED DAN IF HE HAD TAKEN MORE THAN FAIR SHARE OF FOOD AND SUPPLIES WHILE IMPRISONED ON CON SON.

7. HA THUC KY APPEARED NINTH, READING BRIEF STATEMENT THEN OPENING FLOOR TO QUESTIONS. IN REPLY TO AN ATTACK ON HIS REGIONAL BACKGROUND, KY MAINTAINED THAT A TRULY NATIONAL GOVERN-

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MENT WAS VITAL AND IF ELECTED HE WOULD FAVOR NO REGIONAL GROUP. INDIRECTLY ATTACKING THIEU AND KY, HE LATER STRESSED THE NEED TO END CORRUPT DICTATORSHIPS. THE CROWD GAVE KY ONLY LIGHT APPLAUSE WHEN HIS TIME RAN OUT.

8. TRAN VAN HUONG WAS LAST TO SPEAK. HE READ A LONG LETTER WHICH HE HAD WRITTEN ON NOVEMBER 1, 1968. THE LETTER HAD APPEALED TO ALL VIETNAMESE TO CARRY ON WITH NATIONBUILDING.

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AT THE FINISH HUONG REMINDED THE CROWD THAT NEXT SEPTEMBER THIRD WAS A CRUCIAL STEP IN THIS PROCESS. HE POINTED OUT THAT ONLY A CIVILIANVICTORY WOULD BE A MOVE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. IN THE QUESTION PERIOD A CAPTAIN ACCUSED HUONG OF BEING ASSISTED BY FOREIGNERS. HUONG REPLIED THAT HE NEVER RECEIVED ANY FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND ASKED FOR EVIDENCE TO BACK UP THE CHARGE. IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER HOSTILE QUESTION, HUONG DENIED HAVING HIRED A CORRUPT MILITARY OFFICER TO RUN HIS CAMPAIGN. ALTHOUGH THE BY THEN RATHER TIRED CROWD GAVE HUONG LITTLE APPLAUSE, HE HELD THEIR ATTENTION THROUGHOUT.

BUNKER

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